

President Joe Biden greets Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on the South Lawn of the White House, Friday, Jan. 13, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

Biden and Kishida discuss Japan 'stepping up' security

By AAMER MADHANI

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida held wide-ranging talks at the White House on Friday as Japan looks to build security cooperation with allies in a time of provocative Chinese and North Korean military action. The two administrations were also ready to seal an agreement to bolster U.S.-Japanese cooperation on space with a signing ceremony by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Japanese Foreign Af-

fairs Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa.

The Oval Office meeting and signing ceremony at NASA's Washington headquarters will cap a weeklong tour for Kishida that took him to five European and North American capitals for talks on his effort to beef up Japan's security.

Biden welcomed Kishida to the White House on Friday morning for the prime minister's first visit to Washington since he took office in October 2021.

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Eight candidates will compete to become Carnival Little Princess for the district of Noord



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Aruba to receive royal visit on the 30th and 31st of January



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Biden and Kishida discuss Japan 'stepping up' security

Continued from Front

Inside the Oval Office, the U.S. president praised Japan for its "historic" increase in defense spending and pledged close cooperation on economic and security matters.

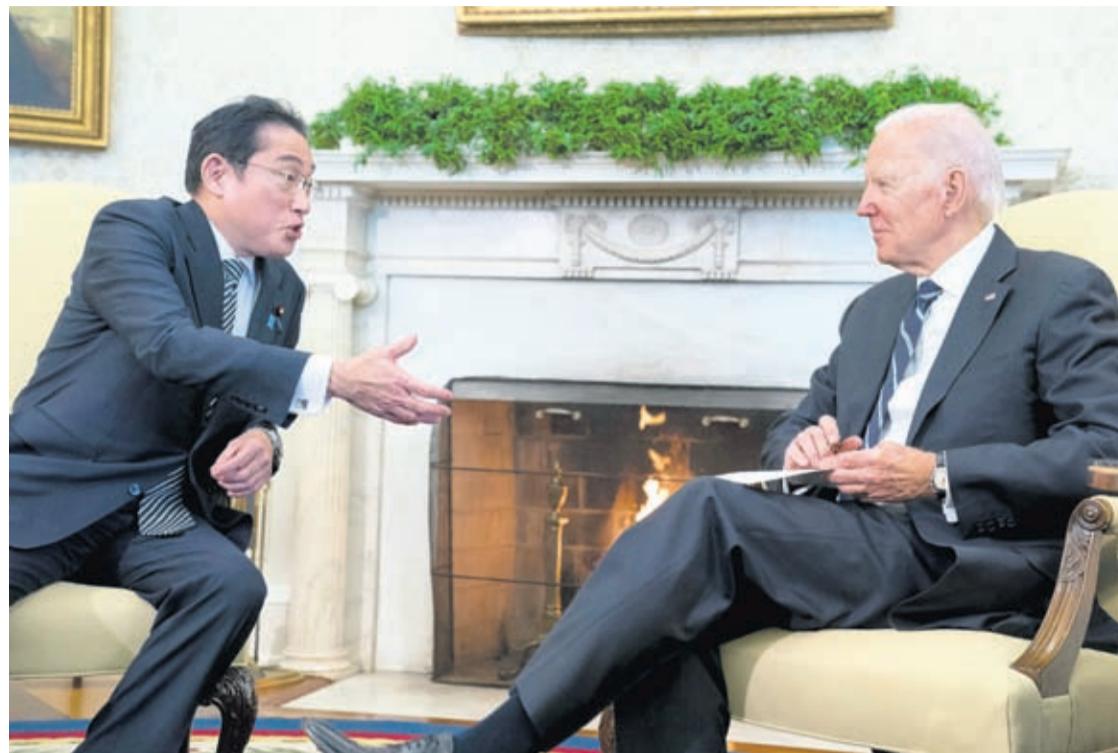
"We meet at a remarkable moment," Biden told Kishida, adding later, "The more difficult job is trying to figure out how and where we disagree."

Kishida, speaking through an interpreter, said the two nations "share fundamental values such as democracy and the rule of law" and stressed that their joint role on the global stage "is becoming even greater."

It all comes as Japan announced plans last month to raise defense spending to 2% of gross domestic product in five years, a dramatic increase in spending for a nation that forged a pacifist approach to its defense after World War II. Japan's defense spending has historically remained below 1% of GDP.

Blinken said this week that the U.S.-Japan space cooperation framework was a "decade in the making" and "covers everything from joint research to working together to land the first woman and person of color on the moon."

He added that the U.S. and Japan agree that China is their "greatest shared strategic challenge" and confirmed that an attack in space would trigger a mutual defense provision



President Joe Biden meets Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in the Oval Office of the White House, Friday, Jan. 13, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

in the U.S.-Japan security treaty.

Before Friday's meeting of the two leaders, U.S. and Japanese officials announced an adjustment to the American troop presence on the island of Okinawa in part to enhance anti-ship capabilities that would be needed in the event of a Chinese incursion into Taiwan or other hostile acts in the region. Japan is also reinforcing defenses on its southwestern islands close to Taiwan, including Yonaguni and Ishigaki, where new bases are being constructed. The leaders discussed Japan's push to step up defense spending and coordination that comes as concerns grow that China

could take military action to seize Taiwan and that North Korea's spike in missile testing could augur the isolated nation's achieving its nuclear ambitions.

Biden and Kishida also discussed intrusions by China's military vessels into Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. The uninhabited islets are controlled by Japan but claimed by China, which calls them Diaoyu. Kishida's sit-down with Biden is the final face-to-face in a week of talks with fellow Group of Seven leaders that focused largely on his efforts to increase Japan's defense spending and urge leaders to improve cooperation.

With Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, he cemented Japan's first defense agreement with a European nation, one that allows for the two countries to hold joint military exercises.

Kishida also discussed with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and French President Emmanuel Macron his hopes to improve security cooperation between Japan and their respective nations.

Germany was the lone G-7 country not on Kishida's itinerary.

Japan last month announced plans to buy U.S.-made Tomahawks and other long-range cruise missiles that can hit targets in China or North Korea un-

der a more offensive security strategy, while Japan, Britain and Italy unveiled plans to collaborate on a next-generation jet fighter project.

"Just a few years ago, there would have been some discomfort in Washington with a Japan that has this kind of military capability," said Chris Johnstone, a former National Security Council official in the Biden administration who is now the Japan Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Those days are gone."

Biden administration officials have praised Japan for stepping up in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Japan was quick to join the U.S. and other Western allies in mounting aggressive sanctions on Moscow, and Japanese automakers Mazda, Toyota and Nissan announced their withdrawal from Russia.

The White House has made the case that China is paying close attention to international efforts to coalesce behind Ukraine as it weighs action on Taiwan.

"We strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, anywhere in the world," the leaders said in a joint statement following their meeting.

The Biden administration officials have been pleasantly surprised by Japan's intensified effort to reconsider its security. □



Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., speaks during a news conference in Statuary Hall at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023.

Associated Press

McCarthy invites Biden for Feb. 7 State of the Union speech

By ZEKE MILLER
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will deliver his second State of the Union address on Feb. 7, the White House said, after House Speaker Kevin McCarthy extended the invitation for him to address a joint session of Congress that day. It will be Biden's first address

to a divided Congress after Republicans took control of the House this month. It will come as his administration seeks areas of common interest with the newly empowered GOP while also working to avoid a potentially debilitating default if the two parties can't come together to raise the debt limit in the coming months. "The new year brings a new Congress, and with

it, a responsibility to work towards an economy that is strong, a nation that is safe, a future that is built on freedom, and a government that is accountable," McCarthy wrote in his invitation to Biden on Friday. "The American people sent us to Washington to deliver a new direction for the country, to find common ground, and to debate their priorities." □

Yellen tells Congress U.S. expected to hit debt limit Thursday

By FATIMA HUSSEIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen notified Congress on Friday that the U.S. is projected to reach its debt limit on Thursday and will then resort to "extraordinary measures" to avoid default.

In a letter to House and Senate leaders, Yellen said her actions will buy time until Congress can pass legislation that will either raise the nation's \$31.4 trillion borrowing authority or suspend it again for a period of time. But she said it's "critical that Congress act in a timely manner."

"Failure to meet the government's obligations would cause irreparable harm to the U.S. economy, the livelihoods of all Americans, and global financial stability," she said.

"In the past, even threats that the U.S. government might fail to meet its obligations have caused real harms, including the only credit rating downgrade in the history of our nation in 2011," she said. Yellen was referring to the debt ceiling impasse during Barack Obama's presidency, when Republicans had also just won a House majority. In this new Congress, the debt ceiling debate will almost certainly trigger a political showdown between newly empowered GOP lawmakers who now control the House and want to cut spending and President



Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen speaks with reporters during a visit to the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation incubator at the Center for Innovative Technology campus in Herndon, Va., Oct. 21, 2022.

Joe Biden and Democratic lawmakers, who had enjoyed one-party control of Washington for the past two years.

"We have seen both Republicans and Democrats come together to deal with this issue," White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters Friday. "It is one of the basic items that Congress has to deal with and it should be done without conditions."

House Republican leaders liken the debt ceiling to a credit card limit and have said they would only raise the statutory ceiling if doing so also secures a spending overhaul.

New House Speaker Kevin

McCarthy told reporters in his first press conference that he had a "very good conversation" with Biden about the coming debt ceiling debate. "We don't want to put any fiscal problems to our economy and we won't, but fiscal problems would be continuing to do business as usual," he said.

"We've got to change the way we are spending money."

McCarthy has floated the kind of budget-cap deal that was engineered in the last go around on the debt ceiling during the Trump administration, which would involve capping federal spending levels in return for

the House votes needed to raise the debt limit.

But any effort to compromise with House Republicans could force Biden to bend on his own priorities, whether that's money for the IRS to ensure that wealthier Americans pay what they owe or domestic programs for children and the poor.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and new House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said in a joint statement Friday that "a default forced by extreme MAGA Republicans could plunge the country into a deep recession and lead to even higher costs for America's work-

ing families on everything from mortgages and car loans to credit card interest rates."

They said the two parties worked together to increase the debt limit three times when Trump was president and Republicans had majorities in the House and Senate. "This time should be no different," the Democratic leaders said.

Yellen said that while Treasury can't estimate how long the extraordinary measures will allow the U.S. to continue to pay the government's obligations, "it is unlikely that cash and extraordinary measures will be exhausted before early June."

Shai Akabas, director of economic policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, told reporters Friday that "this is not the time for panic, but it's certainly a time for policymakers to begin negotiations in earnest."

"Most policymakers agree that we have a major fiscal challenge as a country, our debt is unsustainable," he said, and "there's no reason why we couldn't agree on measures to improve our fiscal outcome, and also ensure that we are paying all of our bills in full and on time."

Treasury first used extraordinary measures in 1985 and has used them at least 16 times since, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal watchdog. □

UFO reports rise to 510, not aliens but still a threat to U.S.

By TARA COPP

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. has now collected 510 reports of unidentified flying objects, many of which are flying in sensitive military airspace.

While there's no evidence of extraterrestrials, they still pose a threat, the government said in a declassified report summary released Thursday.

Last year the Pentagon opened an office, the All-

domain Anomaly Resolution Office, solely focused on receiving and analyzing all of those reports of unidentified phenomena, many of which have been reported by military pilots. It works with the intelligence agencies to further assess those incidents.

The events "continue to occur in restricted or sensitive airspace, highlighting possible concerns for safety of flight or adversary collection activity," the Office

of the Director of National Intelligence said in its 2022 report.

The classified version of the report addresses how many of those objects were found near locations where nuclear power plants operate or nuclear weapons are stored.

The 510 objects include 144 objects previously reported and 366 new reports. In both the old and new cases, after analysis, the majority have been determined



The Pentagon is seen from Air Force One as it flies over Washington, March 2, 2022.

Associated Press

to exhibit "unremarkable characteristics," and could be characterized as un-

manned aircraft systems, or balloon-like objects, the report said. □

U.S. stops hundreds fleeing Cuba, Haiti by sea, returns most

CURT ANDERSON and MARTA LAVANDIER
Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The Coast Guard returned another 177 Cuban migrants who were caught at sea off Florida to the island on Thursday, while a group of about two dozen Haitians swam ashore in Miami.

The Cuban migrants were all intercepted separately off the coast earlier this month, according to a Coast Guard news release. They were repatriated by two Coast Guard cutters. Twenty-five Haitians who had traveled by sailboat from Port-de-Paix, Haiti, swam ashore at Virginia Key, a small island just southeast of downtown Miami, and were taken into the custody of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, agency spokesman Michael Selva said.

Good Samaritans among island beachgoers helped some of the migrants ashore with small boats and jet skis, Selva said.

Dozens of additional migrants still aboard the sail-



Buses carrying Cuban migrants leave from U.S. Coast Guard Sector Key West, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023, in Key West, Fla.

boat were being processed by federal officials at sea, which typically means they are returned to their home countries.

Increasing numbers of Cuban and Haitian migrants have attempted the risky Florida Straits crossing in recent months to illegally

enter the Keys Island chain and other parts of the state as inflation soars and economic conditions deteriorate in their home countries. The spike among Cubans has been especially pronounced. Since Oct. 1, 2022, the Coast Guard has interdicted more than

4,900 Cuban migrants at sea, as compared with more than 6,100 Cubans intercepted during all of fiscal 2022, which ended Sept. 30, according to the news release. The latest returns and landings came just after President Joe Biden's adminis-

Associated Press

stration began a new policy to start turning back Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans at the Texas border, along with Venezuelans, who arrive illegally.

The administration also is offering humanitarian parole for up to 30,000 people a month from those four countries if they apply online, pay their airfare and find a financial sponsor.

Migrants who arrive illegally and don't immediately return home will become ineligible for the new parole. U.S. officials are hoping this will deter sea arrivals by offering a safer alternative and a pathway to residency. The U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba recently resumed processing migrant visas, and said Wednesday that some initial Cuban applicants already had been accepted under the new parole.

In the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, would-be applicants have flocked an immigration office in recent days to apply for passports needed for the U.S. program. □

Pause sought in wind farm ocean prep after 7th dead whale

By WAYNE PARRY
Associated Press

BRIGANTINE, N.J. (AP) — Lawmakers at local, state and federal levels called Friday for a temporary pause in ocean floor preparation work for offshore wind farms in New Jersey and New York after another dead whale washed ashore in the area.

The calls came as most of New Jersey's environmental groups warned against linking offshore wind work and whale deaths, calling such associations "unfounded and premature." The death was the seventh in a little over a month. The spate of fatalities prompted an environmental group and some citizens groups opposed to offshore wind to ask President Biden earlier this week for a federal investigation into the deaths. The latest death Thursday was that of a 20- to 25-foot-

long (6- to 7.6-meter-long) humpback whale. Its remains washed ashore in Brigantine, just north of Atlantic City, which itself has seen two dead whales on its beaches in recent weeks.

There was no immediate indication of what caused the latest death. The Marine

Mammal Stranding Center, based in Brigantine, said it and several other groups were formulating plans Friday for a post-mortem examination of the whale's remains before the animal's carcass is disposed of, most likely through burial on the beach.

"We should suspend all

work related to offshore wind development until we can determine the cause of death of these whales, some of which are endangered," said New Jersey state Sen. Vince Polistina, a Republican who represents the area. "The work related to offshore wind projects is the primary difference in our waters, and it's hard to believe that the death of (seven) whales on our beaches is just a coincidence."

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection referred a request for comment to the governor's office, which did not respond Friday.

Earlier in the week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said that, to date, no humpback whale the species accounting for most of the recent whale deaths in New Jersey and New York



The body of a humpback whale lies on a beach in Brigantine N.J., after it washed ashore on Friday, Jan. 13, 2023.

Associated Press

has been found to have been killed due to offshore wind activities.

Orsted, the Danish wind power developer tabbed to build two of the three offshore wind projects approved thus far in the waters off New Jersey, said its current work off the New Jersey coast does not involve using sounds or other actions that could disturb whales.

It did not say precisely what type of work it is currently doing. The company did not respond to a request for comment Friday.

The Clean Ocean Action environmental group said such site work typically involves exploring the ocean floor using focused pulses of low-frequency sound in the same frequency that whales hear and communicate, which could potentially harm or disorient the animals. □

U.N. chief: Rule of law risks becoming 'Rule of Lawlessness'

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) —

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned Thursday that the rule of law is at grave risk of becoming "the Rule of Lawlessness," pointing to a host of unlawful actions across the globe from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and coups in Africa's Sahel region to North Korea's illegal nuclear weapons program and Afghanistan's unprecedented attacks on women's and girls' rights.

The U.N. chief also cited as examples the breakdown of the rule of law in Myanmar since the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021 leading to "a cycle of violence, repression and severe human rights violations," and the weak rule of law in Haiti which is beset by widespread rights abuses, soaring crime rates, corruption and transnational crime.

"From the smallest village to the global stage, the rule of law is all that stands between peace and stability and a brutal struggle for power and resources," Guterres told the U.N. Security Council.

The secretary-general lamented, however, that in every region of the world civilians are suffering the effects of conflicts, killings, rising poverty and hunger



Hayashi Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, left, meets with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres at United Nations headquarters, Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023.

Associated Press

while countries continue "to flout international law with impunity" including by illegally using force and developing nuclear weapons. As an example of the rule of law being violated, Guterres pointed first to Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

The Ukraine conflict has created "a humanitarian and human rights catastrophe, traumatized a generation of children, and accelerated the global food and energy crisis," the secretary-general said. And referring to Russia's annexation of four regions in Ukraine in late September as well as its 2014 annexa-

tion of Crimea, he said any annexation resulting from the threat or use of force is a violation of the U.N. Charter and international law. The U.N. chief then condemned unlawful killings and extremist acts against Palestinians and Israelis in 2022, and said Israel's expansion of settlements which the U.N. has repeatedly denounced as a violation of international law "are driving anger and despair."

Guterres said he is "very concerned" by unilateral initiatives in recent days by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new conservative government, which

is implementing an ultranationalist agenda that could threaten a two-state solution.

"The rule of law is at the heart of achieving a just and comprehensive peace, based on a two-state solution, in line with U.N. resolutions, international law and previous agreements," he stressed. More broadly, the secretary-general said the rule of law is the foundation of the United Nations, and key to its efforts to find peaceful solutions to these conflicts and other crises. He urged all 193 U.N. member states to uphold "the vision and the values" of

the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to abide by international law, and to settle disputes peacefully.

The council meeting on strengthening the rule of law, presided over by Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi whose country decided on the topic, sparked clashes, especially over the war in Ukraine, between Russia and Western supporters of the Kyiv government. Nearly 80 countries spoke.

"Today, we are beset by the war of aggression in Europe and conflicts, violence, terrorism and geopolitical tensions, ranging from Africa to the Middle East to Latin America to Asia Pacific," Hayashi said.

"We, the member states, should unite for the rule of law and cooperate with each other to stand up against violations of the Charter such as aggression" and "the acquisition of territory by force from a member state," he said in a clear reference to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the council "an ironclad commitment" for the U.S. and a fundamental principle of the United Nations is that "no person, no prime minister or president, no state or country is above the law." □

Swedish govt moves to get rid of permits needed for dancing

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Sweden's center-right coalition government wants to cut red tape when it comes to dancing by abolishing a decade-old requirement for restaurants, nightclubs and other venues to obtain permits before they let patrons shimmy and sway.

The proposal made Thursday means that venues no longer would need a license to organize dances. Instead, as a general rule, they would only have to register with the police, which can be done verbally and does not cost anything.

Applying for a permit incurs

a fee of at least 700 kroner (\$67) for the establishment. As it is now, owners can lose their liquor and business licenses if police officers come by and find out that a venue did not have authorization to let patrons dance.

"It is not reasonable for the state to regulate people's dance," Justice Minister Gunnar Strömer said in a government statement. "By removing the requirement for a dance permit, we also reduce bureaucracy and costs for entrepreneurs and others who organize dances." □

Swedish media outlets

welcomed the move to abolish the dance permits, which have been called outdated and moralistic.

The government proposed having the change take effect on July 1, although it requires parliamentary approval.

In 2016, the Swedish parliament voted unanimously to do away with the permits but the requirement still exists in law and is enforced. Swedish broadcaster SVT said that for the past 20 years, lawmakers from every party except the Social Democrats have favored abolishing the permits. □



People sit in a bar in Stockholm, Sweden, on March 25, 2020.
Associated Press

Afghan rulers urged to reverse ban on women aid workers

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — A strong majority of the U.N. Security Council urged Afghanistan's Taliban rulers Friday to immediately reverse all "oppressive" restrictions on girls and women. The council then went into a closed meeting to discuss the Taliban's latest ban on women working for humanitarian groups, a move that is exacerbating the already critical humanitarian crisis in the country. The joint statement from 11 of the 15 council members said female aid workers are crucial to addressing Afghanistan's "dire humanitarian situation" because they provide "critical life-saving support to women and girls" that men can't reach. It reiterated the council's demand for "unhindered access for humanitarian actors regardless of gender."

Britain's U.N. ambassador, Barbara Woodward, tweeted that as of Thursday, "15% of NGOs had paused all work in Afghanistan, 68% had significantly reduced operations." She added: "Humanitarian aid can't happen without women." Japanese Ambassador Kimihiro Ishikane, the cur-



A Save the Children nutrition counsellor, right, explains to Nelab, 22, how to feed her 11-month-old daughter, Parsto, with therapeutic food, which is used to treat severe acute malnutrition, in Sar-e-Pul province of Afghanistan, Thursday, Sept. 29, 2022.

Associated Press

rent council president, delivered the statement to reporters surrounded by diplomats from the 10 other countries Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Malta, Switzerland, Britain, United States and United Arab Emirates, which called the meeting. The four council nations that didn't support the statement were Russia, China, Ghana and Mozambique.

The 11 council members also urged the immediate reversal of the Taliban's ban on girls attending secondary school and girls and women attending university as well as restrictions on women's human rights and freedoms. Diplomats said that some countries are pushing for a Security Council resolution demanding the Taliban reverse all its edicts on women and girls, that but it

was too early to say if that would happen.

David Miliband, CEO of the International Rescue Committee, a group that has worked in Afghanistan since 1988, said that last year its 8,000 staff, including 3,000 women, served 5.3 million Afghans across the country including 2.7 million women and girls. But the group has been forced to pause most operations because of the de-

cree banning female NGO staff from working, Miliband said in a prepared briefing to the council obtained by The Associated Press.

He outlined a twin-track approach for getting women back to work, saying: "We have a chance of preventing further calamity for the Afghan people, but only if the international community is decisive, practical and disciplined."

On one track, he said, it must be made clear to the Taliban that there can be no business as usual without women workers. "This is the best way, we think, to increase the leverage of the voices within the Taliban movement arguing against this ban," he said.

On another track, Miliband said, when Taliban decision-makers in ministries or localities support reopening services as the health ministry has done and officials at the education ministry "seem to be doing, we will quickly move to restart services and build momentum for a return to our operating model."

He called for "a united international response across the humanitarian movement, led by the U.N., to re-establish the right of NGOs to employ women." □

Israel's outgoing army chief rebukes far-right government

By ISABEL DEBRE

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's outgoing army chief on Friday warned against plans by Benjamin Netanyahu's new coalition to grant more control to pro-settler lawmakers and make other changes to the Israeli security establishment, joining a loud chorus of criticism against the most right-wing government in the country's history.

In several interviews with Israeli news outlets just days before he steps down, Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi took unusually sharp aim at Netanyahu's coalition agreements with hard-line Jewish settler activists who seek to

entrench Israeli rule in the occupied West Bank, restructure the Defense Ministry and control a special

paramilitary police unit. "This is likely to cause damage and adversely affect our preparedness for war,"



IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi speaks during a candle lighting ceremony with Israeli soldiers on the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, in Jerusalem, on Nov. 29, 2021.

Associated Press

Kochavi told the Israeli news site Ynet.

While the coalition deals have sparked furor from many segments of Israeli society, Kochavi's worries have deep significance. Among Jewish Israelis, the military is considered an emblem of stability and one of the country's most trusted institutions.

Kochavi expressed particular concern about the coalition's plans to create three separate sources of authority in the West Bank. Netanyahu gave his right-wing finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, control over an Israeli military body that regulates planning for Israeli settlements and

Palestinian construction in parts of the West Bank where Israel maintains civilian control.

Smotrich is an advocate of the outright annexation of parts of the West Bank that the Palestinians want for their hoped-for independent state.

"There cannot be two commanding authorities (in the West Bank)," Kochavi said. "The separation between us is not good and may cause damage and lead to a worse situation for all populations." Israel captured the West Bank in 1967 along with the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem territory the Palestinians seek for a future state. □

Workshop about manifestation and use of herbs for beginners

Recently, Empowerment Queen, in collaboration with Shelo y Tera, taught her first course for this year. The course called "Manifesting Synergy: The Power Behind Herbs and Intentions" focuses on herb usage to manifest your desires for this coming year.

Those who attended learned about the history and benefits of different

herbs; some of which grow on the island too. During the course, they also explained how you can amplify the power of your intentions and manifestations using herbs, making sure this is done with pure and authentic intentions.

The main goal for Empowerment Queen is to inspire, empower, educate and connect people while fo-

cusing especially on the feminine, illustrating the power of sisterhood.

During this course, participants were given the time and space to absorb all the new information, as well as the opportunity to reflect on what really means to them. Additionally, there were discussions surrounding the topic of when to block out the world and un-



realistic expectations that are placed upon us and live your life the way you see fit and without having the need to explain yourself to anyone.

Empowerment Queen would like to express her gratitude to Josi, Shelo y Tera for sharing their knowledge and for having a beautiful impact on the participants.

"I would also like to en-

courage the Aruban community to keep supporting local businesses by buying your own tea mix, herbs mix, candles and smokies at Shelo y Tera. Thank you to Piso Tres for the beautiful space and thank you to everyone who attended the workshop. This is the first of many, so please follow Empowerment Queen and Shelo y Tera on Facebook and Instagram for more information." □

Aruba to receive royal visit on the 30th and 31st of January

During a press conference about the royal visit on Aruba, president of the commission of organization of royal visits announced that the royal family will be visiting the island on the 30th and 31st of January.

The royal visit was first announced on September 1st 2022, but at that time there was no further information or details about this.

The six islands of the Dutch Caribbean, formerly known as the Dutch Antilles, will all receive a visit from His Majesty King Willem Alexander, Her Majesty Queen Maxima and the Crown Princess Her Royal Highness Amalia.

The host of this visit will be the Governor of Aruba, His Excellency Alfonso Boekhoudt, who will accompany the royal visitors during the festivities. Dutch Secretary of State, Alexandra van Huffelen will also be accompanying the royal family during their stay on the island.

Since August, the commission has had the task of preparing a program of activities for the family's two-day visit.

"It was not easy, to say the least. We had a lot of ideas, a lot of suggestions and petitions to consider adding to the program. Naturally, we had to create a balance in

the program we are offering to the royal family", the president of the commission stated.

The commission had also received petitions and instructions for the royal visit from The Netherlands, and so they combined everything they had to create what the president of the commission thinks is a well-balanced program.

It is important to mention that this is the first time that the Crown Princess Amalia will be visiting the islands, and she had just turned 18 years old. The president of the commission explained that they will keep this in mind for the family and



that there will be a focus on age-appropriate aspects and other aspects of the Princess' interest as a student in the program. The program for the royal visit is one of different activi-

ties and different opportunities for the Aruban community to approach the royal family. More information about the royal visit will be provided in tomorrow's issue of Aruba Today.

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How it all began

It was 1938 when Mr. Eric Ponson started his journey at General Store. Ponson did not hesitate and decided to buy General Store. Buying a store and thus going from employee to owner of a business with a debt of 11.000 guilders was not an easy task.

As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This aloud for a lot more merchandize, products and employees. Supply and demand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. The place where you went to find bulbs, cables, outlets or any other electrical equipment you needed. Business kept going so well that the location at the Steenweg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.

Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. They worked at their parent's side ev-

ery day until they were ready to go abroad to study. In was in their backyard that all containers were stalled. This is why all four children know everything there is to know about the business. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandize as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building. Ponson's General Store now had an electrical department, as housewares department, a paint department and a hardware department.

After a successful opening and expansion, Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mothers vision, decided General Store was ready for yet another expansion. Together with investors a visibility report was drafted, which resulted in Noord being a very good location for another store. The search for a well located property commenced. Soon after the purchase, with the support of Mr. Tom Barfell and management of Do it Best in the States, the construction of Do it Center commenced. Mrs. Claudia Ponson, Kenneth his wife, was the mastermind behind the interior decoration, making sure the interior of the store was according the Do it Best guidelines.

Fast forward to today. A Do it Center in Aruba, with more than 50.000 top of the line items for interior as well exterior use, building materials, STO products and a top of the line grocery store. Perseverance, responsibility, vision and the courage to invest have made Ponson's General Store as successful as it is



today.

Super Do It Center Shaba & Groceries

Located in Shaba, Noord. This is the last sibling of the Do It Center family. Here you will be able to find anything you are looking for. The building is divided into several departments from home to hardware to groceries. Everything under one roof.

Groceries? Visit the fully stocked supermarket with fresh fruits and vegetables and high class meat selections. Highly known products and brands are here for you to grab. Every week Do It Center Groceries offers you great discount on selected items. Weekly specials are very popular and a perfect chance for you to buy your favorite products at a reduced price.

Need a home makeover? Do not skip the furniture department "Leenbakker". Here, you will find a divine collection of European furniture, worldwide known for their modern and stylish features for your bedroom, bathroom, living room or kitchen. For your garden they have a wide selection of durable furniture specially made for our tropical climate. Take a walk around and find some treasures. Find the perfect accessory for your house, fitted for your personality and style. Modern, elegant, retro industrial, whatever your style is you will definitely find something for your personal taste.

Feeling hungry? Take a break and relax at the 'Deli'. Savor a delicious lunch or a sandwich with a cup of coffee or perhaps a wrap. If you are a sweet tooth you will not be able to just skip the great variety of desserts they have. So tempting!

Do it Center Shaba is open from Mon to Sat from 8AM to 8PM and closed on Sunday

Do It Center Camacuri

Do it Center Camacuri as mentioned before was the first official building of the Do It Center family. After serving the community for many years as a multipurpose facility this was recently transformed to a department specially designated for contractors services only. Open from Mon to Fri from 7.30AM to 6PM. On Sat from 7.30AM- 4 PM and closed on Sunday.

Do It Center Savaneta

This location is the baby of the family. Here you will also be able to find everything for your home and garden and building materials to build or renovate your home. Just drive into the 'Lumber Drive-Thru' and the experts will help you with everything you need. Open from Mon to Fri from 8AM to 6PM, SAT, 10AM-4PM and closed on Sunday.

For more information go to www.doit.aw. □

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CCTV Cameras installed along Carnival routes in San Nicolas and Oranjestad

ORANJESTAD – On January 10, 2023, the Minister of Justice and Social Affairs, Mr. Rocco Tjon, held an evaluation meeting with the new Senior Prosecutor, Mr. Erades, and the Chief of Police, Mr. Arnhem, to discuss the past torch parade.

Additionally, they met with the director of ELMAR to discuss the options to increase security in Aruba by installing CCTV cameras on light posts to protect carnival participants and onlookers. They also talked about the project, Safe neighborhoods, for which they approved the installation of street illumination in multiple areas two weeks ago.

As indicated by the Police Department, there were more arrests during this year's torch parade compared to the last held Torch parade in 2020, although the seriousness of these incidents compared to 2020 was less. The Police arrested 19 individuals for a variety of incidents. The most frequent incidents were public disturbances, like public intoxication.



The Police were also present on the outskirts of the parade route and were present with their motor unit. According to the Police, the message to use a designated driver when drinking reaches more and more people, and fewer people are driving under the influence. All in all, the police are satisfied with the community's behavior during the last torch parade.

To increase security even more during the carnival season, the Government and ELMAR will work together in a pilot project to install CCTV cameras on all

street light posts along the route of the carnival parades, both in San Nicolas and in Oranjestad. ELMAR has the infrastructure to install all the cameras to provide security to the participants and onlookers during the carnival.

Although the 19 arrests generated Awg. 11.400,00 for the Government, the objective of the "Faya bo Haya" program is not to generate money but to guarantee safety for everyone and make sure everyone gets home safe and sound after the parades. □



The healthy school project expands



ORANJESTAD – On January 10, 2023, the Minister of Tourism and Public Health, Mr. Dangui Oduber, the Minister of Education, Mr. Endy Croes, representatives of the Youth Health Care, Social Affairs, and the Department of Education received a presentation about the healthy school project.

This project is part of the national prevention plan, and the government designated 2023 as the year of prevention in public health.

Since 2020, a national prevention plan in place created with the support of all stakeholders in Aruba and the input of the Pan American Health Organization PAHO. Aruba is one of the few countries in the Caribbean with a national prevention plan. The plan implementation schedule was in 2020, but due to the pandemic that started in March 2020, it was postponed. In 2023, the national prevention plan will come into effect at full speed.

Prevention is vital in healthcare as it improves the quality of life in the community. The Minister believes in awareness campaigns for the public to live healthier lives. Education about nutrition, exercise, and regular medical checkups are essential for the community's well-being.

It is essential to start with the children in schools to teach them about these healthy habits to reach this goal. They will teach preschool and elementary school children the importance of taking care of their health. With the government's support, they hope to convince as many schools as possible to join the healthy school project.

Soon a Ministerial decree will be signed by the Minister of Public Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Social Affairs, and all Government departments that are part of the Healthy School program. They will disclose more details about this program in a joint press conference when the decree is signed. □



Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost

Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mango's hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

Mispel

This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

Kenepa

Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to

cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

Druif

There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

Shimaruku

Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimaruku. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarukus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

Tamarind

A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized

bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system. Start the day with a 'batida' (smoothie) enriched with a local veggie touch or select your restaurant that offers local vegetable dishes to get the real pure taste of it.

Konkomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Konkomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements



needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

Jambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di Jambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content.

Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

Bonchi' Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack.

Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

Pompuna

In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruban restaurants is Sopa Di Pompuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □



Eight candidates will compete to become Carnival Little Princess for the district of Noord

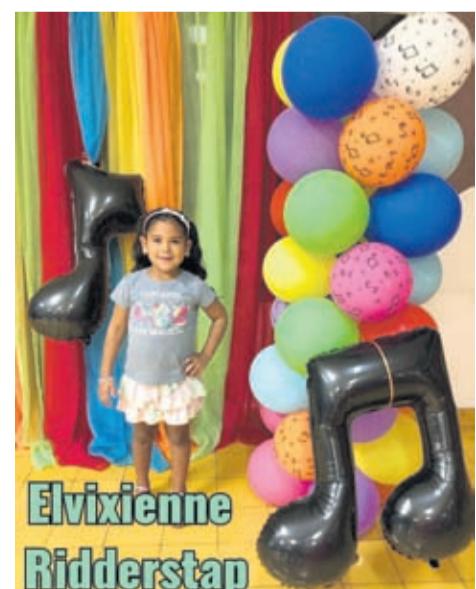
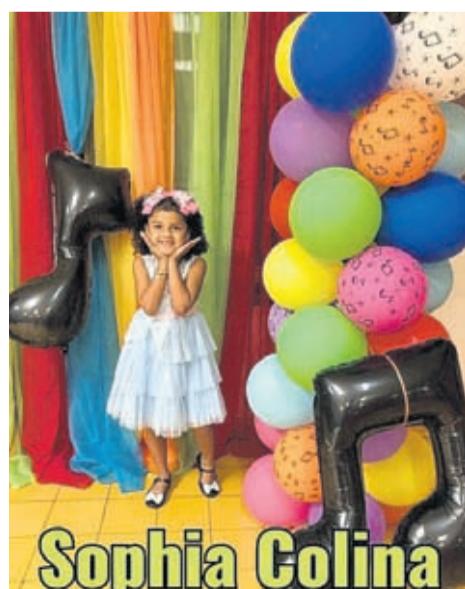
ORANJESTAD – On their Facebook Page, the community center for the district of Noord introduced the eight beautiful candidates who will compete on Friday, 27 January for the next crown of Princesita Noord 2023 – Carnival's Little Princess.

The election is going to take place at the Centro di Bario Noord at 7pm. Doors will open at 6:30pm to allow all supporters to come cheer for their favorite candidates. Carnival elections are a beautiful show of costume, pageantry, music and colors, and are one of the key aspects of Aruba's Carnival since its inception.

The candidates for Princesita Noord are:

Xeena Dijkhoff;
Saraí Ruiz Gonzalez;
Gilliany Gomez;
Sophie-Marie Solognier;
Sophia Colina;
Dianee Lampe;
C-Lainy Rosa;
Elvixienne Ridderstap.

All candidates are between 5 to 7 years old. Amelia Kamperveen, who is the current Children's Queen Noord 2023, was the Princesita Noord in 2020 and on the 27th of January will be handing the crown to her successor. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 41 Horn

1 Diver sounds Louganis 42 Went

5 Strikes, fast in a way

10 Intensify DOWN

12 Deep pink 1 Like Zeus

13 Kagan and Ares

of the Supreme Court

14 Knowing

15 German article

16 Flock father

18 Garden visitor

19 Persist with

21 Skating spot

22 Newbies

24 Shade

25 Draw

29 Leave speechless

30 Some singers

32 Spell

33 Hamilton's bill

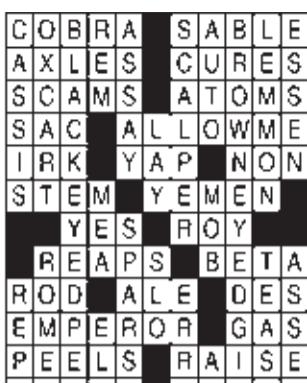
34 Gullet

35 Sports site

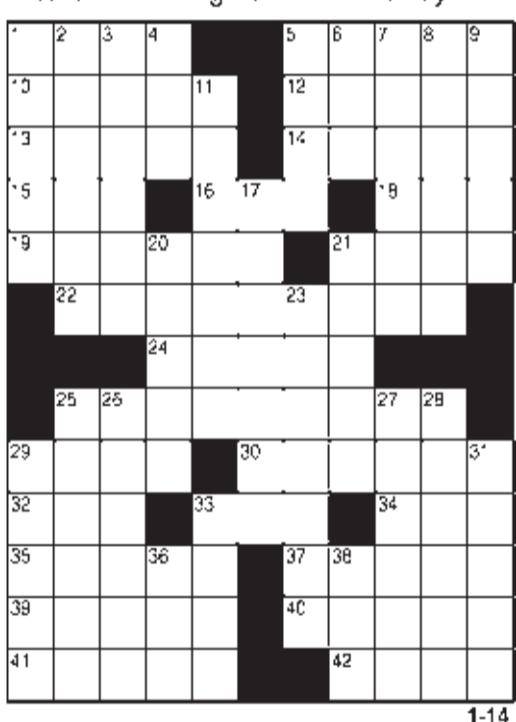
37 Make fun of

39 Disgusted

40 Completely full



Yesterday's answer



1-14

AXYDIBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three Ls, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-14

CRYPTOQUOTE

X L Q W N C S Q K B O B X O T Q

A U O Q B . X L Q Y J C S Q K B O B

E J G ' D Q X L Q Z O U J X .

— TO VLN QU NUX BL GU QD

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: YOUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES DON'T DETERMINE WHERE YOU CAN GO, THEY MERELY DETERMINE WHERE YOU START. — NIDO QUBEIN

How pay transparency may affect your job search or raise



A help wanted sign is displayed outside of a hair salon in Chicago, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023.

Associated Press

By HAL M. BUNDICK of NerdWallet

Knowing if you're being paid fairly for the work you do is a mystery shrouded in a lack of information. That may be changing, though, and pay transparency may be the catalyst. It's a growing trend for companies to reveal what a job opening or current position pays whether voluntarily, or because governments mandate it.

NAVIGATING SALARY RANGES

So far, about a dozen states and municipalities have mandated access to salary information, including California, Colorado, Washington and New York City. Companies in the jurisdictions are generally required to post salary ranges indicating the minimum and maximum pay. Rules vary: Sometimes only job applicants must be told, while other times current employees can also request information about their pay range.

Roberta Matuson, president of Matuson Consult-

ing in Boston, consults with companies looking for top-tier talent. She believes pay transparency "is a step in the right direction."

"Knowledge is power. So, you know, if you have no idea that you can possibly earn more money, then you wouldn't even ask for it," Matuson says.

IS THIS THE END OF SALARY NEGOTIATION?

Pay transparency won't eliminate salary negotiation, says Lexi Clarke, vice president of people at Payscale, a national provider of compensation data and services. Instead, Clarke says it will encourage discussions of current and future pay expectations.

It will help employees and candidates "understand what their expectations should be, and where (salary) boundaries are and where there might be flexibility. It levels the playing field between employers and candidates to have a more open and transparent conversation," she says.

And Lulu Seikaly, a senior corporate attorney with Payscale, notes that as current laws stand, employers aren't prevented from offering pay higher than a range that is posted for a position, as long as the company can provide objective reasoning for the exception.

In the past, companies would often base salary offers on what an individual earned in their previous jobs, Seikaly says. "A lot of states have banned that now."

If a potential employer asks for your salary history, Matuson says, "I wouldn't refuse to answer; I would say, 'Well, tell me what you're offering for this position.' I would just turn the question around."

WILL PAY GAPS BE ELIMINATED?

Pay transparency reveals salary ranges, but does it narrow gender and ethnicity pay gaps? It may be too early to tell.

However, Payscale's Clarke says that organizations that are more open about salaries often have a well-defined compensation structure and are less likely to have pay inequities.

She predicts how the gender pay gap might narrow: "Women's salaries will increase to where they should be; some overpaid men's salaries may slightly decrease, to be more in line with where they should be."

WHAT IF YOU'RE AT THE LOW END OF THE RANGE?

If you find out you're at the lower end of a salary band, Clarke says pay transparency will help you communicate with an employer about what you think you deserve. "And you're anchoring that all into data, which is really powerful," she adds.

Matuson says to ask your employer how you can add more value and what skills you need to increase your pay and opportunities for promotion. □

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Migrant entry numbers into Europe hit six-year high

BRUSSELS (AP) — The number of attempts by migrants to enter the European Union without authorization reached around 330,000 last year, the highest number since 2016, the EU's border and coast guard agency said Friday. Almost half of the 2022 attempts were made over land through the Western Balkans region, EU agency Frontex said, according to its "preliminary calculations." Regardless of entry route, Syrians, Afghans and Tunisians together accounted for roughly 47% of the attempted border crossings.

Men accounted for more than 80% of the attempts to get in, Frontex said. The agency calculates entry attempts rather than the number of people trying to get into Europe, because it's often difficult to identify migrants, who routinely travel without passports, and some may try to enter multiple times.

People arriving at Europe's borders to apply for asylum have a reasonable chance of being allowed in, while those who come without a visa in search of jobs and better lives are mostly turned away.

Well over 1 million people, most of them Syrians fleeing conflict, entered the EU in 2015, overwhelming reception facilities and sparking one of the 27-nation bloc's biggest political crises. Member countries still argue over who should take responsibility for peo-



Migrants wait for food distribution in Bihac, Bosnia, close to the border to Croatia on Nov. 28, 2018. Associated Press

ple arriving without authorization and whether their neighbors and partners should be obliged to help. Attempts to reform the bloc's asylum system have made little progress.

Frontex's latest figures didn't include almost 13 million Ukrainian refugees who were counted at the EU's external borders between February and December. Special emergency measures were introduced to ease their entry and help find them accommodation, training and short-term jobs.

The number of people making potentially perilous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea in poorly equipped and often overloaded boats and rubber dinghies continued to rise last year. Frontex said that well over 100,000 crossing attempts were recorded, around 50% more than in 2021.

Egyptians, Tunisians and Bangladeshis tried in the greatest number. The agency said that 2022 saw the most people in five years arrive from Libya, the main departure point in

northern Africa. The number of people leaving Tunisia hit the highest level in recent history. □

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AP source: McCutchen returns to Pirates on \$5M, 1-year deal

By WILL GRAVES

AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Andrew McCutchen served as the centerpiece for the Pittsburgh Pirates' long-awaited renaissance a decade ago.

The veteran outfielder is coming back home, hoping to serve as a mentor to a young group trying to follow in his footsteps.

A person with knowledge of the agreement tells the Associated Press that McCutchen, a five-time All-Star and the 2013 National League MVP for the Pirates earlier in his career, has agreed to a \$5 million, one-year deal with the club. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the agreement is pending a successful physical.

The signing is a homecoming for the 36-year-old McCutchen, who helped guide the Pirates to three straight playoff berths from 2013-15 after two decades of losing. He was traded to San Francisco in January 2018 in a cost-cutting move in a swap that sent outfielder Bryan Reynolds, then a prospect in the Giants organization, to Pittsburgh.

McCutchen's return comes



Pittsburgh Pirates' Andrew McCutchen hits his 200th career home run during the first inning of a baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers, Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2017, in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

as the Pirates are shopping Reynolds, Pittsburgh's everyday centerfielder and an All-Star himself in 2021. Reynolds requested a trade last month. Though he's been gone for five years, McCutchen remains beloved in his adopted hometown. He's been greeted warmly whenever he's played at PNC Park in a visitor's uniform and joked while visiting Pittsburgh last season with the Brewers that it was nice to sleep in

his own bed for once. He'll get a chance to do it far more frequently in 2023. McCutchen spent the first nine seasons of his career with the Pirates and still maintains a residence in the area. He's bounced around since being traded to the Giants, splitting time between San Francisco and the New York Yankees in 2018. He spent three seasons with the Phillies from 2019-21 and played for Milwaukee last season.

McCutchen hit .237 with 17 home runs and 69 RBIs for the Brewers in 2022. The deal adds another experienced voice to a team that has spent the offseason bringing in veteran pitcher Rich Hill and first baseman Carlos Santana on one-year deals of their own in hopes they can provide leadership to a young core that includes shortstop Oneil Cruz.

No active player knows more about what it takes to

snap the Pirates out of the doldrums than McCutchen.

A first-round pick by Pittsburgh in the 2005 draft, McCutchen's dazzling play in the field and electric hitting at the plate fueled the franchise's turnaround after 20 years of losing. The Pirates reached the playoffs as a wild card in three straight seasons from 2013-15, advancing to the NL Division Series in 2013.

McCutchen was at his best during the height of Pittsburgh's resurgence. He finished in the top three in NL MVP voting from 2012-14, winning the award in 2013 when he hit .317 with 21 home runs and 84 RBIs.

McCutchen hit .291 with 203 home runs, 725 RBIs and 171 stolen bases during his first stint with the Pirates.

He returns to Pittsburgh with the club hoping to show signs of progress in 2023 following the top-to-bottom overhaul general manager Ben Cherington began when he took over in the fall of 2019. The Pirates are coming off back-to-back 100-loss seasons but have spent the last three years stockpiling prospects nearing their arrival in the majors.□

Anderson Varejão back with Cavs in player development role

By TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Anderson Varejão has bounced back to the Cavaliers.

One of the most popular players in Cleveland's history, Varejão has been hired as a player development consultant and global ambassador for the team that he played with for 14 NBA seasons.

Known for his hustle and frizzy hair, Varejão, affectionately nicknamed "Wild Thing" for his rambunctious playing style, was with the Cavs from 2004-15. He spent two seasons with Golden State before the center returned to Cleveland after a three-year break. He retired after playing five games in the 2020

season.

Varejão had stayed con-

nected to the organization, making periodic appear-

ances at practices and games.

In his new role, Varejão will help develop players on the floor while also working with coaches and front office members during the season. The Brazilian will also travel to broaden the team's global reach, especially in Latin America.

"Andy embodies all that the city of Cleveland stands for and beyond, and we couldn't be more excited to bring his experience, leadership and character back into the Cleveland Cavaliers family," said Koby Altman, the Cavs president of basketball operations. "His infectious work ethic and commitment to our community have earned him his right-

ful place in the fabric of this organization and all of Northeast Ohio, and his impact on the game internationally will benefit our global outreach."

The Cavs plan to honor Varejão with a halftime presentation at their Jan. 21 game against the Bucks.

"I am thrilled and honored once again to be a formal part of the Cavaliers family," said Varejão. "This is a unique opportunity to start a new chapter of my life with the team I love and in the city I love."

Varejão was a key member on two 60-win teams with Cleveland. He averaged 7.5 points and 7.5 rebounds in 596 games for the Cavs, who acquired him in a 2004 trade with Orlando.□



Cleveland Cavaliers' Anderson Varejão (17), from Brazil, drives the lane between Boston Celtics' Kevin Garnett and Kendrick Perkins (43) in the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2009, in Cleveland.

Associated Press

NFL All-Pros: Kelce, Jefferson unanimous; 16 first-timers

By ROB MAADDI
AP Pro Football Writer

Travis Kelce and Justin Jefferson are unanimous choices for The Associated Press 2022 NFL All-Pro Team, and Sauce Gardner is the first rookie cornerback selected in 41 years.

The Chiefs' Kelce and the Vikings' Jefferson received first-team votes Friday from all 50 members of a nationwide panel of media members who regularly cover the league.

Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes, San Francisco 49ers edge rusher Nick Bosa and Chiefs defensive lineman Chris Jones each got 49 of 50 first-team votes. The Chiefs and Niners led the way with four players each on the first team. Gardner, the fourth overall pick by the New York Jets, was named on all 50 ballots, receiving 43 first-place votes. Pro Football Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott was the last rookie cornerback chosen for the first team in 1981. "That's a big deal to me," Gardner told the AP. "It was one of my goals before training camp. It's something I pray for. I worked so hard for it. It's a true blessing for sure." Kelce's older brother, Jason, also earned first-team honors for the fifth time in his career to stay one ahead of his pass-catching brother. Jason Kelce's fellow Philadelphia Eagles linemate, right tackle Lane Johnson,



Seattle Seahawks tight end Noah Fant can't make the catch as New York Jets cornerback Sauce Gardner, right, defends during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023, in Seattle.

Associated Press

joins him on the squad. "Big honor, especially happy for (Johnson) who is the best tackle in the NFL without question, especially on the right side," Jason Kelce told the AP. Johnson, a second-time All-Pro, has missed the past two games with an adductor injury but hopes to return when the No. 1 seed Eagles host a divisional round playoff game next week. "We put in a lot of time and effort in the game, especially as you get older, you start to cherish it," Johnson told the AP. Las Vegas Raiders running back Josh Jacobs is among the 16 first-time All-

Pros. Jacobs led the NFL in rushing with 1,653 yards, scored 12 touchdowns rushing and averaged 4.9 yards per carry. The Raiders had three first-team picks despite finishing 6-11. "The year definitely didn't go the way we wanted it to but, individually, it's definitely an honor to be selected," Jacobs told the AP. Jefferson, who had a league-best 128 catches and 1,809 yards receiving, is the other newcomer on offense. Miami's Tyreek Hill made it for the fourth time, third as a receiver. Hill had 119 catches for 1,710 yards and seven TDs in his first

season with the Dolphins. Raiders wideout Davante Adams got the nod for a third time. Adams had 100 receptions for 1,516 yards and 14 TDs in his first season in Las Vegas. Cowboys right guard Zack Martin is a six-time All-Pro, 49ers left tackle Trent Williams and Browns left guard Joel Bitonio made it for the second straight season. Mahomes also was an All-Pro in 2018 when he was the NFL MVP. He led the league with 5,250 yards passing and 41 TDs, helping the Chiefs go 14-3 to capture their seventh straight AFC West title. Philadel-

phia's Jalen Hurts got one first-team vote, preventing Mahomes from being a unanimous choice.

Cowboys edge rusher Micah Parsons, 49ers linebacker Fred Warner and Steelers safety Minkah Fitzpatrick are the only returning All-Pros on defense. It's a third time for Fitzpatrick. Parsons, who had 13 1/2 sacks, made it as a linebacker his rookie season last year. Bosa, Jones, Jets defensive lineman Quinnen Williams, Ravens linebacker Roquan Smith, Bills linebacker Matt Milano, Broncos cornerback Patrick Surtain II and Niners safety Talanoa Hufanga all earned their first All-Pro selection.

Bosa led the NFL with 18 1/2 sacks. Williams had 11.

"I tell my wife my goals every day so she can keep me accountable and make sure I do the right thing and it was become a Pro Bowler and an All-Pro," Williams told the AP.

"To get this news, all the work I put in has paid off and I gotta continue to do the same thing."

All six special-teams players are first-timers, too.

They are: Raiders kicker Daniel Carlson, Chiefs punter Tommy Townsend, Packers kick returner Keisean Nixon, Patriots punt returner Marcus Jones, Commanders special teamer Jeremy Reaves and Vikings long snapper Andrew DePaola. □

Tyler Adams voted top U.S. men's soccer player for 2022



Tyler Adams of the United States (4), and Wales' Ben Davies vie for the ball during the World Cup, group B soccer match between the United States and Wales, at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium in Doha, Qatar, Monday, Nov. 21, 2022.

Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Tyler Adams was voted the U.S. Soccer Federation's Male Player of the Year for the first time on Friday after becoming the youngest captain at last year's World Cup.

Adams received 71.6% of votes, followed by three-time winner Christian Pulisic (14.7%), Matt Turner (8.2%), Antonee Robinson and Tim Ream.

A 23-year-old midfielder from Wappinger, New York, Adams tied for the U.S.

lead with 14 starts in 2022 and led with 1,131 minutes. Adams, who transferred to Leeds from Leipzig last summer, was elected American captain in a vote by about 35 players held in September. He was the youngest U.S. captain at a World Cup since Walter Bahr in 1950 and one of two captains under 30 among the World Cup teams, joined by England's Harry Kane. Back in the World Cup after missing the 2018 tournament, the U.S. advanced to

the round of 16 before losing 3-1 to the Netherlands. Player of the year voting was conducted among the USSF board of directors and athletes council, Major League Soccer and United Soccer Leagues head coaches, media, former players, administrators and fans, whose ballots were weighted at 15%.

Landon Donovan won the award a record four times, followed by Clint Dempsey, Kasey Keller and Pulisic with three each. □

Weekly SPECIALS



 <p>Entrecanto Brasil</p>	 <p>Pork Strips Shoarma</p>	 <p>Halos Clementines 3LB</p>	 <p>Post Variety Cereal</p>
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 <p>U.S. Pork Boneless Sirloin / Hamlappen</p>	 <p>Potato Baking 5LB</p>	 <p>Spinach Cello 10oz</p>	 <p>Apples Gala 3lbs</p>	 <p>EE Crinkle Cut Fries 32oz</p>
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 <p>Ragu CC Classic Alfredo 16oz</p>	 <p>EE Ketchup 24oz</p>	 <p>Jello Pudding Lemon 3.4oz</p>	 <p>Container With Lid 500 ML 25PK</p>	 <p>Tropical Assorted Drink 500 ML</p>
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DAIRY/FROZEN	HBC/GM	DELI/BAKERY
 <p>Nathan's Skinless Beef Franks 14oz</p>	 <p>Irish Spring Soap Bar Original 3 Pack</p>	 <p>Havarti Danish Cheese</p>
 <p>TJ Farms Select California / Winter Blend 12oz</p>	 <p>Gwoon Vochtig Toiletpapier 70st</p>	 <p>Black Forest Ham</p>

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